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c. 1968/10/03

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

~~SECRET~~/HARVAN

WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 91-479
By ..., NARA, Date 1-6-93

Memorandum for the Record

Meeting with Ambassador Vance, October 3, 1968, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Ambassador Vance reported to the President in his bedroom on the course of the negotiations in Paris.

The President asked Amb. Vance if he was optimistic. He said he was. The President asked him for his reasons, and also put the same question to Mr. Rostow. They both suggested to the President that it was possible that Hanoi regarded itself in a military position and a political position vis-a-vis the government in Saigon in which its bargaining power was diminishing. Whatever the advantages might be in waiting for a new Administration on January 20, they might assess their problem as one in which the military situation was likely to deteriorate over coming months; the ARVN would expand, improve its equipment, and increase its confidence; and the Thieu government would gain in stability, acceptability, and legitimacy. Therefore, it was possible they might wish to settle the war sooner rather than later. The President expressed some skepticism. He then laid out his position under three headings:

-- there must be private understanding of GVN participation in the negotiations after a bombing cessation;

-- Hanoi must understand that the DMZ must not be violated;

-- Hanoi must understand that the cities must not be attacked.

As with Amb. Harriman, the President said to Amb. Vance that it would be essential that the whole government be very close together and agreed on the resumption of bombing if these understandings were violated. Amb. Vance, without hesitation, indicated his agreement with this position. (see attached cables for confirmation of Harriman-Vance positions on resumption of bombing communicated to the President.)

The President then suggested that Amb. Vance and Mr. Rostow go to Mr. Rostow's office and make sure the position as outlined by the President was perfectly clear between them.

W. W. Rostow

~~SECRET~~/HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS attachments

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